IN THE HIGH COURT OF GUJARAT AT AHMEDABAD

CRIMINAL APPEAL No. 1144 of 1995

For Approval and Signature:

HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE KS JHAVERI

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1 Whether Reporters of Local Papers may be allowed to see the judgment ?

2 To be referred to the Reporter or not ?

3 Whether their Lordships wish to see the fair copy of the judgment ?

4 Whether this case involves a substantial question of law as to the interpretation of the constitution of India, 1950 or any order made thereunder ?

5 Whether it is to be circulated to the civil judge ?

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STATE OF GUJARAT - Appellant(s)
Versus
DADUBHAI BHANBHAI JABALIA (KATHAI DARBAR) - Opponent(s)

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Appearance :
MR AJ DESAI APP for Appellant(s) : 1,
None for Opponent(s) : 1,

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CORAM : HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE KS JHAVERI

Date : 01/10/2007

ORAL JUDGMENT

1.0 This appeal is directed against the judgment and order dated 01.09.1995 passed by the learned Judicial Magistrate, First Class, Rajkot in Criminal Case No. 2114 of 1991 whereby, the respondent was acquitted of the offences alleged against him.

2.0 The brief facts of the prosecution case are as under;

2.1 On 19.01.1991, at around 0500 hrs., while the respondent who was driving a Government vehicle – Jeep bearing registration No. GBI – 9713 on the Ahmedabad – Rajkot route, he dashed on the back-portion of a stationary Truck bearing registration No. GTY – 3748, on account of which the respondent – driver as well as three other co-passengers traveling in the said vehicle, sustained severe bodily injuries. Out of the said three passengers, one of them who was a Police Constable, died on the spot. The respondent and the other passengers were then admitted to a Hospital for necessary medical treatment.

2.2 A complaint for offences punishable u/s. 279, 337, 304-A of Indian Penal Code and Sections 177 & 184 of the Motor Vehicles Act was filed against the respondent. At the end of investigation, charge-sheet was filed against the respondent before the Court of learned J.M.F.C., Rajkot. Trial was initiated against the respondent and at the end of trial, the learned Magistrate acquitted the respondent of the offences alleged against him by the impugned order. Being aggrieved by the said order, the appellant – State has approached this Court by way of this appeal.

3.0 Heard learned counsel for the appellant and perused the entire documents on record. None appears on behalf of the respondent. The principles which would govern and regulate the hearing of appeal by this Court against an order of acquittal passed

by the trial Court have been very succinctly explained by the Apex Court in a catena of decisions. This Court has the power to re-consider the whole issue involved in the appeal, re-appraise the evidence and come to its own conclusion and findings in place of the findings recorded by the trial Court, if the said findings are against the weight of the evidence on record or, in other words, perverse. Even in a recent decision of the Apex Court in the case of ***State of Goa v. Sanjay Thakran & anr. reported in (2007) 3 S.C.C. 755***, the Court has reiterated similar principle. In Para-16 of the said decision, the Court has observed as under ;

> "16. From the aforesaid decisions, it is apparent that while exercising the powers in appeal against the order of acquittal the Court of appeal would not ordinarily interfere with the order of acquittal unless the approach of the lower Court is vitiated by some manifest illegality and the conclusion arrived at would not be arrived at by any reasonable person and, therefore, the decision is to be characterized as perverse. Merely because two views are possible, the Court of appeal would not take the view which would upset the judgment delivered by the Court below. However, the appellate Court has a power to review the evidence if it is of the view that the conclusion arrived at by the Court below is perverse and the Court has committed a manifest error of law and ignored the material evidence on record. A duty is cast upon the appellate Court, in such circumstances, to re-appreciate the evidence to arrive to a just decision on the basis of material placed on record to find out whether any of the accused is connected with the commission of the crime he is charged with".
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> [*Emphasis supplied*]

4.0 In the impugned order, the trial Court has recorded a finding of fact that there are no eye-witnesses to the incident in question in order to establish that the respondent was negligent while driving the vehicle in question. The prosecution has failed to prove beyond doubt the guilt against the respondent. There is no evidence on record, much less any evidence in the form of deposition/s of any of the prosecution witness/s, to indicate that the respondent was negligent while he was driving the vehicle in question.

5.0 Apart from that the two 'panch' witnesses, in whose presence the 'panchnama' of the scene of offence is said to have been performed, have not supported the case of the prosecution. Thus, merely because a passenger lost his life on account of the said accident, the respondent herein could not be held guilty for the said offence in the absence of any evidence on record to that effect.

6.0 In above view of the matter, I am of the opinion that the trial Court was completely justified in acquitting the respondent of the offences alleged against him. In my view, the findings recorded by the trial Court are absolutely just and proper and in recording the said findings, no illegality or infirmity has been committed by it. I am in complete agreement with the findings, ultimate conclusion and the resultant order of acquittal recorded by the trial Court and, hence, find no reasons to interfere with the same. I am not discussing the evidence of each witness in detail in view of the

observations made by the Apex Court in the case of ***State of Karnataka Vs. Hemareddy*** reported in ***A.I.R. 1981 S.C. 1417*** wherein it is held as under:

> "... This court has observed in Girija Nandini Devi V. Bigendra Nandini Chaudhary (1967)1 SCR 93: (AIR 1967 SC 1124) that it is not the duty of the appellate court when it agrees with the view of the trial court on the evidence to repeat the narration of the evidence or to reiterate the reasons given by the trial court expression of general agreement with the reasons given by the Court the decision of which is under appeal, will ordinarily suffice."

7.0 In the result, the appeal is dismissed. Office is directed to send the Records & Proceedings of the case, if lying with this Court, to the trial Court concerned forthwith.

[K. S. Jhaveri, J.]

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